

HA-1461

1871

Preston Gilbert's Law Office  
6-8 Office Street  
Bel Air  
private

This three bay two story frame office building is typical of the structures built for offices and shops in Town in the 1870's and 1880's. It relies on its bracketed cornice and window shutters for decoration. Bel Air never indulged in the excesses of Victorian architecture, and this building is a good example of the reserved yet elegant style preferred in Town.

Preston Gilbert, an attorney and Bel Air's first Mayor, built the building. It housed a dentist's office for many years. Today it has a business service on the first floor and an apartment upstairs.

## MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Preston Gilbert's Law Office

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

6 - 8 Office Street

1st

CITY, TOWN

Bel Air

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Harford

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☒ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☒ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Dr. Frederick L. Hodus

Telephone #: 838-6221

STREET &amp; NUMBER

335 Kenmore Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Bel Air

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21014

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Harford County Court House

Liber #: 635

Folio #: 601

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Bel Air

STATE

Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**7 DESCRIPTION**

HA-1461

**CONDITION**

☐ EXCELLENT  
☒ GOOD  
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED  
☐ RUINS  
☐ UNEXPOSED

**CHECK ONE**

☐ UNALTERED  
☒ ALTERED

**CHECK ONE**

☒ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

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Preston Gilbert's Law Office is at 6 - 8 Office Street in the Town of Bel Air, Harford County, Maryland. It is a two-story frame building covered in shiplap siding, 22' x 28'. Built as a store house with a law office upstairs, the building is currently vacant downstairs, the most recent tenant being Dr. Corbin, a dentist. Upstairs (#8) is a four-room apartment occupied for the last eight years by Mr. and Mrs. Grover. The building is painted beige with cocoa trim.

This simple Victorian structure is a three-bay building whose only trim is the bracketed cornice and louvered shutters at the upstairs windows. The windows in the second story are double-hung 2/2. The three bays in the first story are occupied by the entry doors to #6 and #8, paneled below, with three longitudinal panes in the top part, the whole topped by a single paned transom. The doors flank the large 3 paned show window, partly altered by the enclosure of the bottom half.

The first floor interior has two rooms to the east with a small bath and storage room to the west. Farther to the west is the entry to the second floor apartment, which includes a hall leading to a bathroom and the cellar door. The open string single run staircase rises along the west wall. The stairway has a square newel post without finial and plain balusters. The apartment includes a hall at the top of the stairs, living room, kitchen-pantry, dining room, and bedroom.

There is a half-cellar under the entry hall to #8.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

# **8 SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES      1879      BUILDER ~~X K O H T E C X~~      Preston Gilbert

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This small Victorian store building, unornamented save for its bracketed cornice and shutters, is a well preserved example of the store buildings constructed in Bel Air shortly after the Civil War. Other examples occur in the same block of Main Street. These stores always have apartments or offices on the second floor.

A. Preston Gilbert (1840-1893) was a graduate of Dickenson College. He read law with Henry Farnandis and was admitted to the bar in 1864. He married Mollie Bouldin, daughter of Charles D. Bouldin, editor of the Harford Republican. They had four children: Harriet Maulsby, Preston, Martha Susan, and Douglas Bouldin. Gilbert specialized in conveyances and collections. He died in 1893 at the age of 53 after an operation at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

The inventory in Gilbert's estate shows the furnishings a country town lawyer had in his office.

desk	\$10
bookcase	5
safe	10
sofa	4
stove	5
4 chairs	1
old table & bookcase	1
law books	40
	<hr/>
	\$76

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

# **9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Harford Democrat, August 18, 1893, obituary

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

## **10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

This property occupies parcel 823 in the Town of Bel Air  
22' (Office Street) x 83'

### LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

## **11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

M. Larew

29 December 1978

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Town of Bel Air

838-8700

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

39 Hickory Avenue

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Bel Air

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
21 STATE CIRCLE  
SHAW HOUSE  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HISTORIC SITES SURVEY FIELD SHEET  
Individual Structure Survey Form

COUNTY: Harford	SURVEY NUMBER: HA-1461
TOWN: Bel Air	NEGATIVE FILE NUMBER:
LOCATION: 6 - 8 Office Street Bel Air, Maryland	UTM REFERENCES: Zone/Easting/Northing
COMMON NAME: Dr. Corbin's Office	U.S.G.S. QUAD. MAP:
FUNCTIONAL TYPE: Commercial	PRESENT FORMAL NAME:
OWNER: Dr. Frederick L. Hodus ADDRESS: 335 Kenmore Avenue Bel Air, Maryland	ORIGINAL FORMAL NAME: Preston Gilbert's Law Office
ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Yes ( ) No ( ) Restricted (X)	PRESENT USE: 1st fl. vacant/flat 2nd fl.
LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local (X) State ( ) National ( )	ORIGINAL USE: Law off. (2nd) store (1st)
GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Structural System	ARCHITECT/ENGINEER:
1. Foundation: Stone (X) Brick ( ) Concrete ( ) Concrete Block ( )	BUILDER/CONTRACTOR:
2. Wall Structure	PHYSICAL CONDITION OF STRUCTURE: Excellent ( ) Good (X) Fair ( ) Poor: ( )
A. Wood Frame: Post and Beam ( ) Balloon (X) probably	THEME: Architecture
B. Wood Bearing Masonry: Brick ( ) Stone ( ) Concrete ( ) Concrete Block ( )	STYLE: Victorian
C. Iron ( ) D. Steel ( ) E. Other:	DATE BUILT: 1879
3. Wall Covering: Clapboard ( ) Board and Batten ( ) Wood Shingle ( ) Shiplap (X) Novelty ( ) Stucco ( ) Sheet Metal ( ) Aluminum ( ) Asphalt Shingle ( ) Brick Veneer ( ) Stone Veneer ( ) Bonding Pattern: Other:	
4. Roof Structure	
A. Truss: Wood ( ) Iron ( ) Steel ( ) Concrete ( )	
B. Other:	
5. Roof Covering: Slate ( ) Wood Shingle ( ) Asphalt Shingle ( ) Sheet Metal ( ) Built Up ( ) Rolled ( ) Tile ( ) Other:	
6. Engineering Structure:	
7. Other:	
Appendages: Porches ( ) Towers ( ) Cupolas ( ) Dormers ( ) Chimneys ( ) Sheds ( ) Ells ( ) Wings ( ) Other: Shutters	
Roof Style: Gable ( ) Hip ( ) Shed ( ) Flat (X) Mansard ( ) Gambrel ( ) Jerkinhead ( ) Saw Tooth ( ) With Monitor ( ) With Bellcast ( ) With Parapet ( ) With False Front ( ) Other:	
Number of Stories: 2	Entrance Location: Office Street
Number of Bays: 3	
Approximate Dimensions:	
THREAT TO STRUCTURE: No Threat (X) Zoning ( ) Roads ( ) Development ( ) Deterioration ( ) Alteration ( ) Other:	LOCAL ATTITUDES: Positive ( ) Negative ( ) Mixed ( ) Other:

HA-1461

ADDITIONAL ARCHITECTURAL OR STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTION:

#8 entry to upstairs apt. Cellar under #8 - Square newel post, plain balusters. #6 formerly Dr. Corbin's office (dentist) linolium on floors - glass in top of rear door translucent, also the one in 2nd entrance - partitions may be original but probably not.

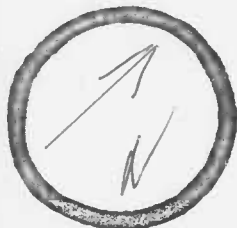
RELATED STRUCTURES: (Describe)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Built as office and store space during Bel Air's post Civil War expansion.

REFERENCES:

MAP: (Indicate North In Circle)



Preston  
Gilbert's  
Office

First  
National  
Bank

6-8

34.  
Main

MAIN ST

Office St

SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT:

Open Lane( ) Woodland( ) Scattered Buildings( )  
Moderately Built Up( ) Densely Built Up( )  
Residential( ) Commercial(X)  
Agricultural( ) Industrial( )  
Roadside Strip Development( )  
Other:

M. Larew

RECORDED BY:

Town of Bel Air

ORGANIZATION:

29 December 1978

DATE RECORDED:

TITLE  
6 - 8 Office Street  
Owner F. L. Hodous

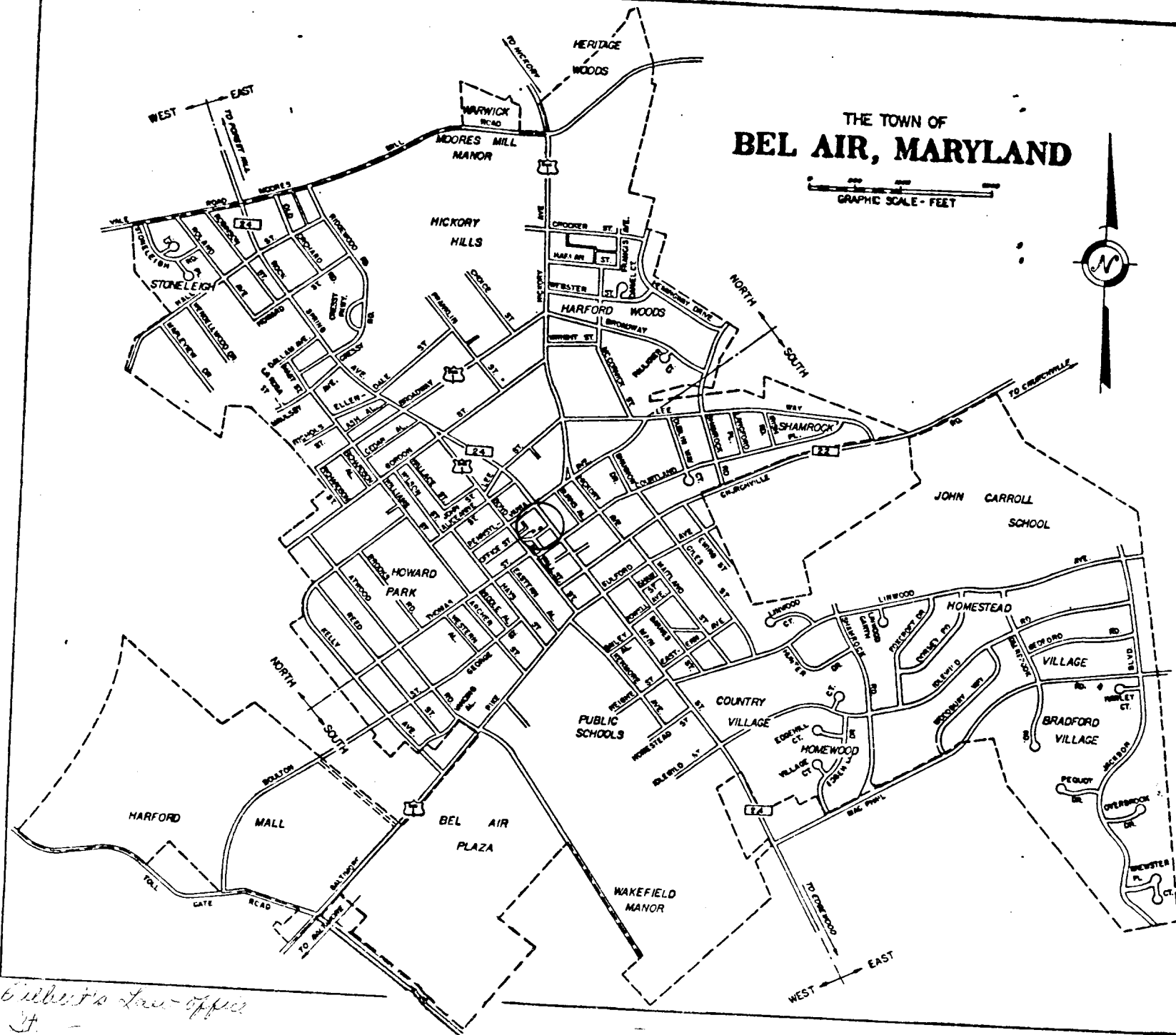
635/601	3 December 1963 Elizabeth F. Hopkins, widow to Frederick L. Hodous and Joan, w. 22' x 83'
171/226	26 October 1920 Noble L. Mitchell, Trustee for the sale of property of A. Preston Gilbert, deceased (will 1893 JMM 11/353) to Dr. Hopkins
39/136	27 March 1879 Stevenson Archer, Trustee in Jacobs vs. Jacobs (1876) to A. Preston Gilbert \$500 lot 22' x 82'3"

The land was part of that left by Thomas Hays to his daughter Pamela, the property to pass to his daughter Elizabeth Jacobs and her issue if Pamela died without issue. The suit was between Elizabeth and her husband James M. Jacobs and their adult children Georgia and Alice Jacobs on the first part and Elizabeth's and James's minor children Lucy, Eva, Rosa, and Frank Hays Jacob on the second part for the purpose of forcing sale of the property to invest the proceeds in "some safe security". Richard T. Martin was appointed guardian to answer for the children and Stevenson Archer was appointed trustee for the sale of the property. The town property included most of the land bounded by Main Street, Office Street, Bond Street, and Pennsylvania Street. Excepted were the store lot at Office and Main, the Richard Bouldin store lot on Office and Bond, and James Fulton's Property on Main and Pennsylvania.



# THE TOWN OF BEL AIR, MARYLAND

GRAPHIC SCALE - FEET



HA-1461

Preston Gilbert's Law Office  
6 Office St.  
Bel Air











HA-1461





2, 4, 6, 8 Oppen St.

8-10-78

HA-1461